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# Moscow's Andropov viewed by man who saw ascendancy

By Linell Smith  
Evening Sun Staff

Last February, an ex-Soviet diplomat named Vladimir Sakharov began telling American reporters that 68-year-old Yuri Andropov seemed destined to succeed Leonid Brezhnev as general secretary of the Communist Party.

Sakharov, a former CIA informant who defected to the United States in 1971, also predicted that Andropov would resign from his post as director of the Soviet intelligence organization, the KGB, in order to position himself for Brezhnev's job.

After Andropov resigned his post in May, many Western analysts continued to scoff at Sakharov's claim that Andropov was the most likely choice for Brezhnev's job. They said the Communist Party still associated the KGB with the bloody purges of the Stalin era, that choosing Andropov would be political suicide.

"When he was put in charge of the KGB, Andropov was perceived as a party apparatchik, not as a KGB figure. He was the party person to straighten out the KGB and bring it under the Central Committee's control," Sakharov said recently during a phone interview from his Los Angeles home.

Sakharov, who grew up as a member of the Moscow elite in the 1950s and 1960s, says that Andropov's 15-year internal cleanup program transformed the KGB into a respectable part of the Soviet leadership system. He also says that, among his Soviet baby boom contemporaries, Stalin is not perceived as such a bad guy.

Sakharov's 1980 book, "High Treason," tells of his childhood and his five-year career as a Russian diplomat/agent in North Yemen, Egypt and Kuwait. During that time, Sakharov's disillusionment with the Soviet system caused him to provide the CIA with details of his routine intelligence work. But some of his most fascinating stories concern the social dynamics of the Moscow elite, the privileged class of intelligence officers, party officials

As a member of this exclusive clique, Sakharov went to the right schools and met the right people. In fact, he first met Andropov's son, Igor, 20 years ago. They were 17-year-old students taking the entrance exam for the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, the nation's most prestigious university. Each year, the institute accepts 60 students—usually members of the Moscow elite—to prepare them for careers as diplomats.

"Igor was special even then," Sakharov recalls. "He was destined to go into the institute's American-study group. At that time, it was impossible to get into; they only accepted three students a year. He was smart enough to get enrolled in the institute, but the pull of his family became the most important thing after that."

The year Igor took his exam, his father had completed his ambassadorship to Hungary and was overseeing the Central Committee's department for relations with socialist bloc countries.

"At that time, Igor was a very shy individual. Not a joiner," says Sakharov. "He stuck to himself. He was also absolutely harmless. He did not belong to the system of informers, of *stukachi*, in our class. He seemed most interested in the study of American culture. So was I. So we exchanged records and books."

Sakharov met Yuri Andropov only once, at a party Igor gave at his father's Moscow apartment. It was a typical teen gathering, Moscow elite-style.

"It was 1963. We were all about 18. We drank a lot and listened to Western decadent music—a Chubby Checkers record. I remember we were doing the Twist. The party lasted about five hours, then Igor told us to leave because his father was coming back. So we were just running out as he was coming in and he was quite pleasant. They were a pretty solid, decent family as far as I knew.

"There was a sister, too, I think. Older. But Igor was the hope of the family. Still, in the Soviet Union, the son is supposed to be the one to make it in life and the woman doesn't count."

At present, Igor is a member of the Soviet delegation at the 35-nation European Security Conference in Spain; his older sister Irina is married to Alexander Filipov, an actor who has performed in avant-garde productions in Moscow. Yuri Andropov is a widower.

Sakharov remembers Andropov's apartment as containing forbidden luxuries common to other households of the Moscow elite: Scandinavian furniture, books in English by Somerset Maugham and John Steinbeck, a stereo, Western liquor and records by Glenn Miller, Dave Brubeck, Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee.

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